
News release

Communiqué

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HONOURS GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARDS RECIPIENTS

OTTAWA – The Honourable Helena Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women), is pleased to announce today the recipients of the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case. Celebrating their 30th anniversary, the Awards recognize outstanding individuals who have helped to advance the goal of equality for women. The awards ceremony will take place at Rideau Hall on October 1, 2009.

“Our Government is pleased to recognize the achievements of these distinguished women, who have so enriched our national life with their contributions,” said the Honourable Helena Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women). “The legacy of the Famous Five endures through the work of these women. By dedicating their lives to bringing about true and lasting change, they have benefited women, their families and their communities across Canada, and strengthened Canadian society, as a whole.”

The following six individuals are the 2009 recipients of the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case:

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, of Wikwemikong, Ontario, a well-known role model and advocate, was instrumental in founding the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Native Women's Association of Canada and Indigenous Women of the Americas. She fought a landmark court challenge to regain her Aboriginal status. Jeannette sits on many boards, including the National Aboriginal Health Organization.

Daphne E. Dumont, of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, who was the first woman admitted to study law at any of the Oxford men's colleges, has led a distinguished career, devoting herself to organizations that promote equality for women. She is a founding member of the Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF). She has volunteered with community groups, providing legal aid, advice on family law and access to justice.

Bev LeFrancois, of Oakville, Ontario, is a school teacher and mother of four who has been a passionate advocate for women's rights. She has advocated for women's rights in such areas as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* equality clause, the “Rape Shield” law and matrimonial property laws and has helped establish community, women's and rape crisis centres and shelters for battered women.

Karen Messing, of Montréal, Quebec, is an academic, researcher, author and scientist. For over 30 years, she has worked to promote policies and practices that support working women. She chairs the Gender and Work Technical Committee of the International Ergonomics Association. She has increased opportunities for women, helping to ensure women's workplace needs are considered so they can access all jobs without endangering their health.

Mary Scott, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, has a long history of advancing equality for women, with a particular focus on Aboriginal women. Mary has applied her skills in internet technology to teaching, relaying communications to networks and creating web pages for many women's organizations. Mary was also instrumental in the success of an oral history project and the Babs Friesen Councils of Women Archival Project.

Youth Award recipient **Pauline Fogarty** of Thunder Bay, Ontario, became involved in social activism at an early age. She designed a girls' collective, served with the Regional Multicultural Youth Centre and has worked on a wide array of issues, including mental health, gender, anti-smoking and First Nations advocacy.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Persons Case. In 1929, five Canadian women – Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby and Nellie McClung, who became known as the Famous Five – fought and won the right for women to be recognized as persons, and thus eligible to sit in the Senate. In 1979, the Government of Canada established the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Persons Case decision and to salute contributions to the advancement of women.

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